



President
George J. Kourpias

Secretary-Treasurer
Ruben Burks

February 14, 2005

The Honorable Gil Gutknecht
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gutknecht:

The Alliance for Retired Americans supports H.R. 328, the "Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2005." We appreciate that you are sponsoring legislation that would lower prescription drug costs for American consumers by allowing the importation of drugs with appropriate safeguards. Your bill will ensure safety by mandating that the Food and Drug Administration approve drugs and manufacturing facilities before reimportation. Additionally, imported drugs must be packaged and shipped using approved counterfeit-resistant technologies.

Americans pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world. This state of affairs is a national embarrassment. Older Americans and people with disabilities are particularly hard hit by the high costs of prescription drugs in the United States because they have more acute and chronic illnesses, use more prescription drugs for treatment and are less likely to have insurance coverage.

For the past four years, the Alliance has sponsored bus trips to Canada for seniors who are forced to make the trips in order to purchase affordable prescription drugs. Our members have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars by going to Canada. However, this legislation and these trips are not a solution to the prescription drug crisis that older Americans face. We need to repeal the 2003 Medicare law's ban that prohibits Medicare from negotiating directly with drug companies for lower drug prices.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is committed to enacting legislation that improves the quality of life for retirees and all Americans. Passage of H.R. 328 will be a significant step to ensure that all Americans have better access to affordable prescription drugs.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. F. Coyle".

Edward F. Coyle
Executive Director